

**Solaris
Soars
Coloring Book**

Janet McNulty



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Solaris Soars

Coloring Book

Janet McNulty
Illustrated by Robert Henry

This coloring book is a work of fiction.

Solaris Soars Coloring Book

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This coloring book is a companion to the final
book in the Solaris Saga which include:

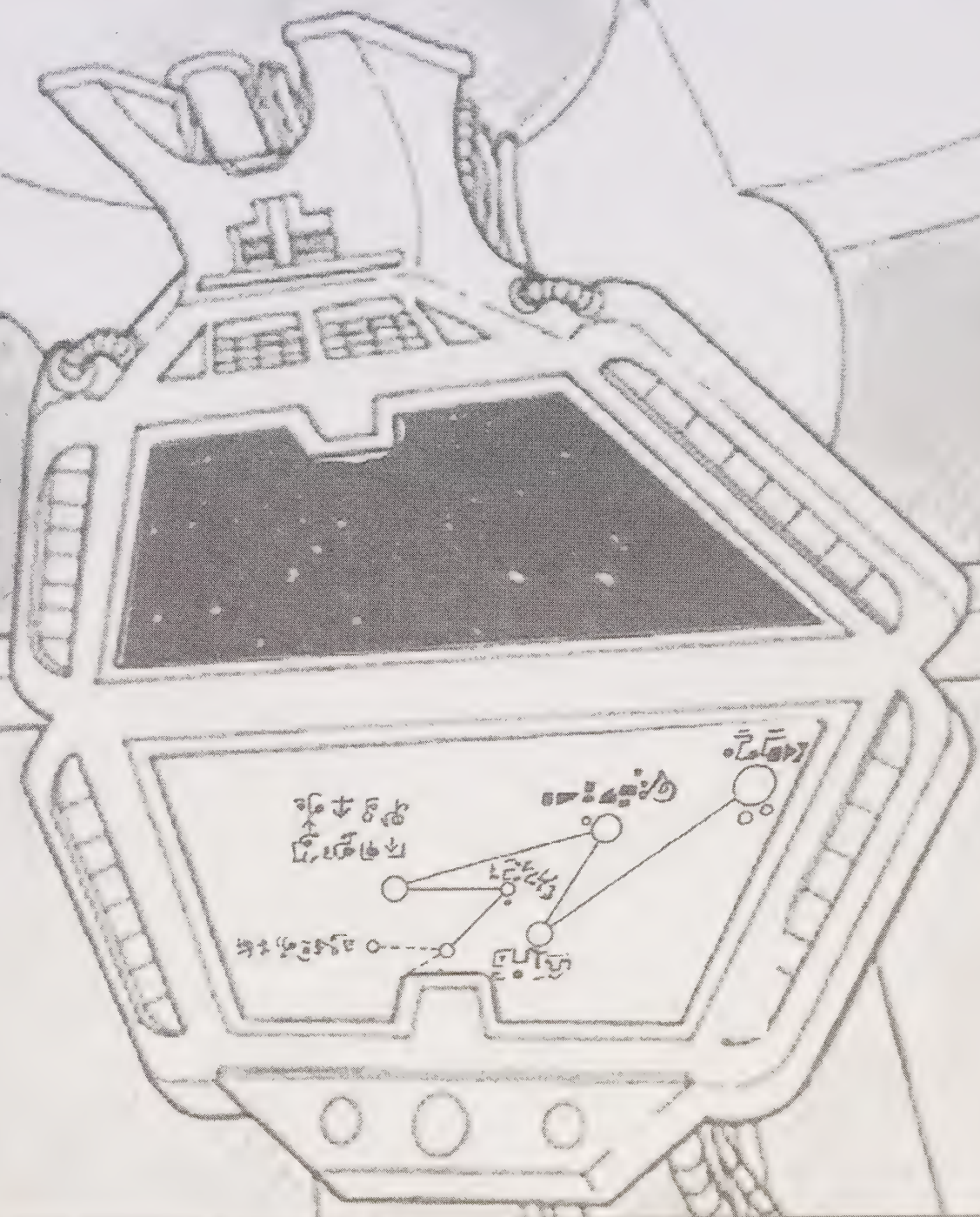
Solaris Seethes
Solaris Seeks
Solaris Strays
Solaris Soars

I hope you enjoy it.

-Janet McNulty

You can tear this page out and use it to put
between the images so as to avoid bleed through.

General Delmar steered the ship towards the lone, abandoned-looking space station before him; the beacon grew stronger as they neared the floating pile of welded debris that resembled a crushed aluminum can more than a space station. Hylne sat in the seat next to him, watching the proceedings and keeping constant watch on the proximity gauges.



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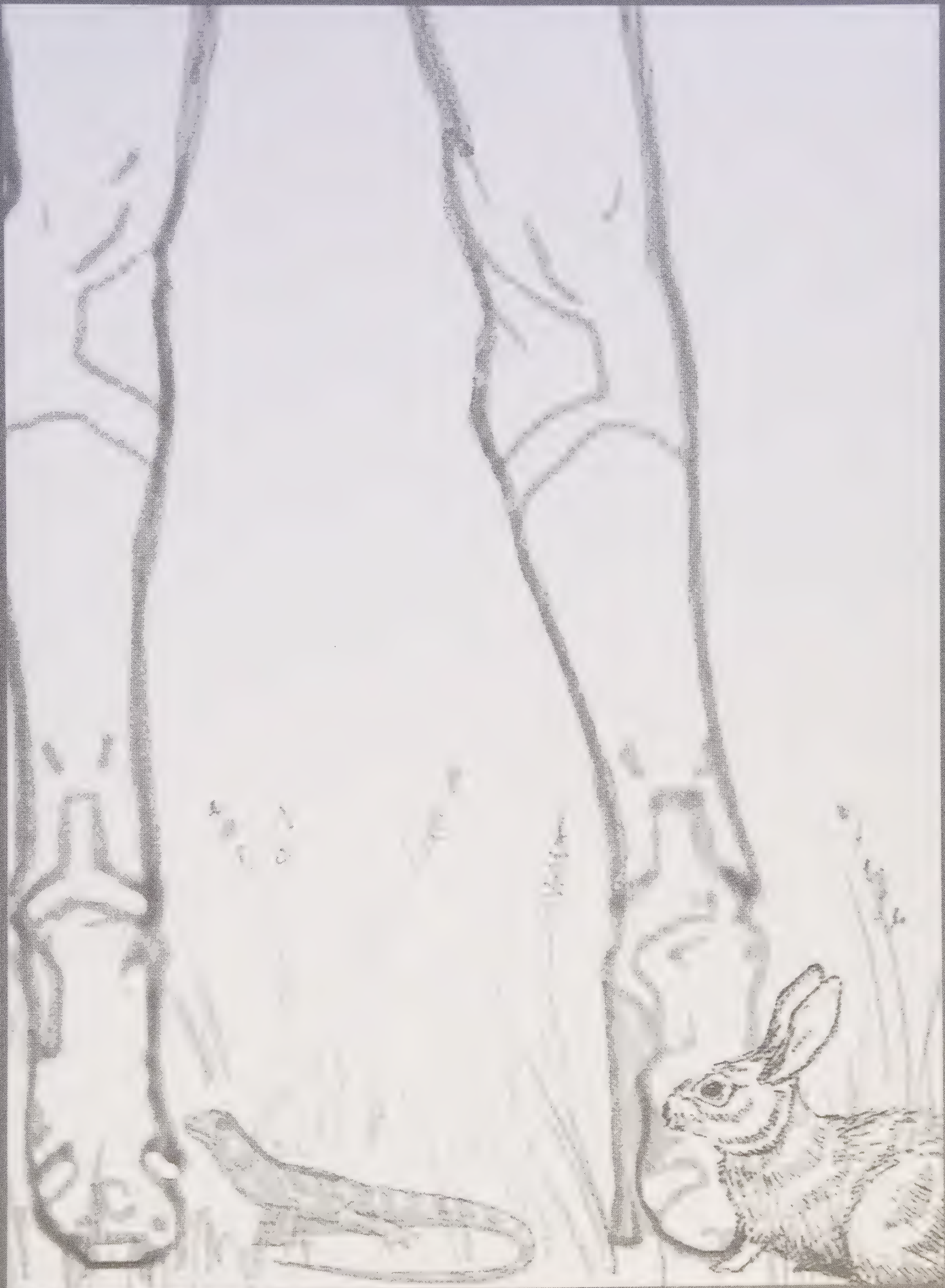
செவ்வாய்

The escape pod bounced and shook from the force of re-entry; flames engulfed it, heating the outer hull to 2,966 degrees Fahrenheit. Sweat trickled down their faces as they plunged even further, punching through the upper layers of the atmosphere until they had reached the troposphere. Land came into view. Obiah steered the escape pod as best as he could; the force of re-entry had damaged the navigational controls. He punched in the coordinates that Klanor had given him, but the computer refused to recognize them; instead, it directed him to what it had mapped as the next closet location.

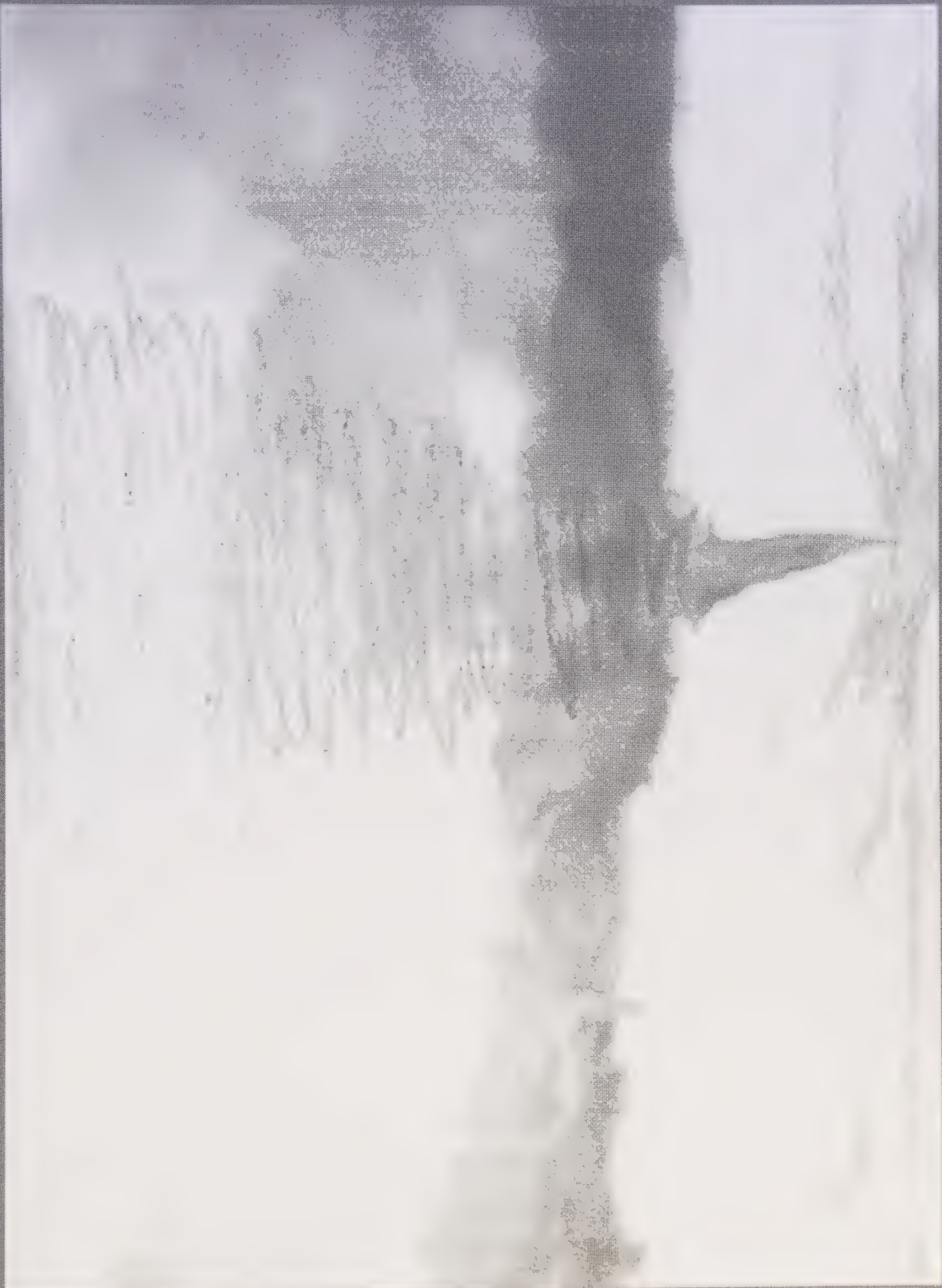


The sharp ends of the naked brush (the buds had just formed) pricked her skin, but she did not register it. A bush rustled behind her as a rabbit sprang into it, hiding from what it perceived as imminent danger. She ignored it. For a brief moment, Solaris turned and looked behind her; the urge to go back tugged on her, but she disregarded it and continued on, treading through a world she did not know. She had failed them, and that was all that mattered to her. Marlow had once called her his guiding star, but how can she guide anyone when she felt lost and confused. No, Solaris thought to herself, *I am no one's guiding star.*

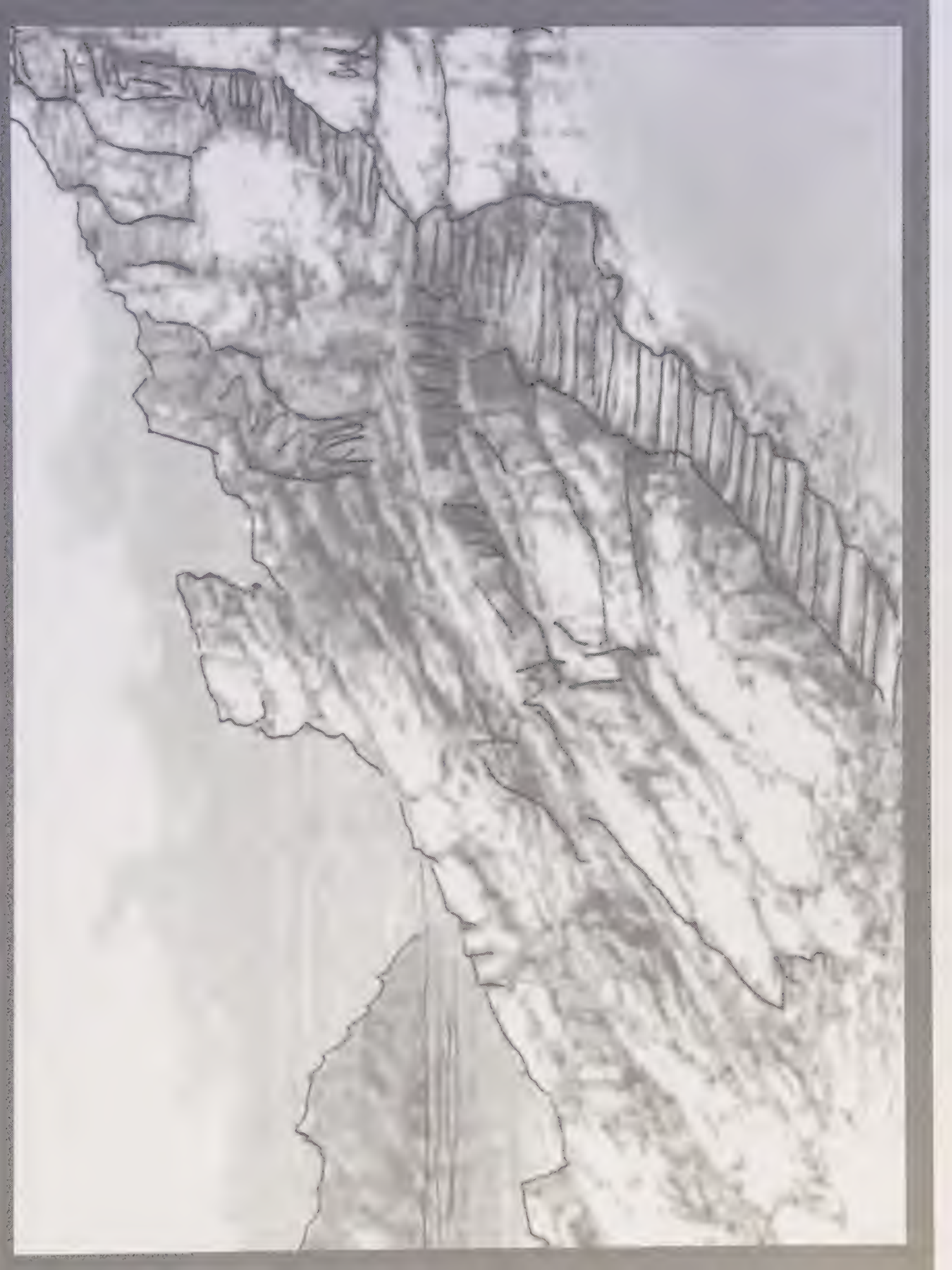
A lizard scurried across the sand before her feet. Solaris studied its movements a moment, once again faced with a creature she had never seen, before walking forward. She continued her trek. An anthill, with a line of ants spilling from it, attracted her attention for a moment as she thought about being one of them. Shrugging away the notion, she moved onward.



Solaris stopped. A distorted, transparent shape lay just ahead, beckoning her to come to it, but should she? Taking cautious steps, she moved towards it, her eyes focused on the small swirls that lined the distorted mass until... she recognized it. It was a vortex, what some called a micro worm-hole, much like the ones she had used to bring Tom, Solon, Brie, and Alfric to her and Rynah, but what was it doing there?



Alfric ran ahead of his men, 20 in number, his bearskin cloak (made from the same bear he had killed in his youth) flapped behind him, exposing his kyrtil (and the gold embroidery marking his station as king) as they chased the enemy army that had—foolishly—dared to invade his kingdom and steal the treasures that he had brought back from his journey south. Their thundering feet warned all of an impending storm: the storm of retaliation.



Her communications device, which she had forgotten was in her pocket, chirped. Forgetting where she was and that she was to maintain a low profile, Solaris took it out and turned it on, allowing its holographic image to fill the car.

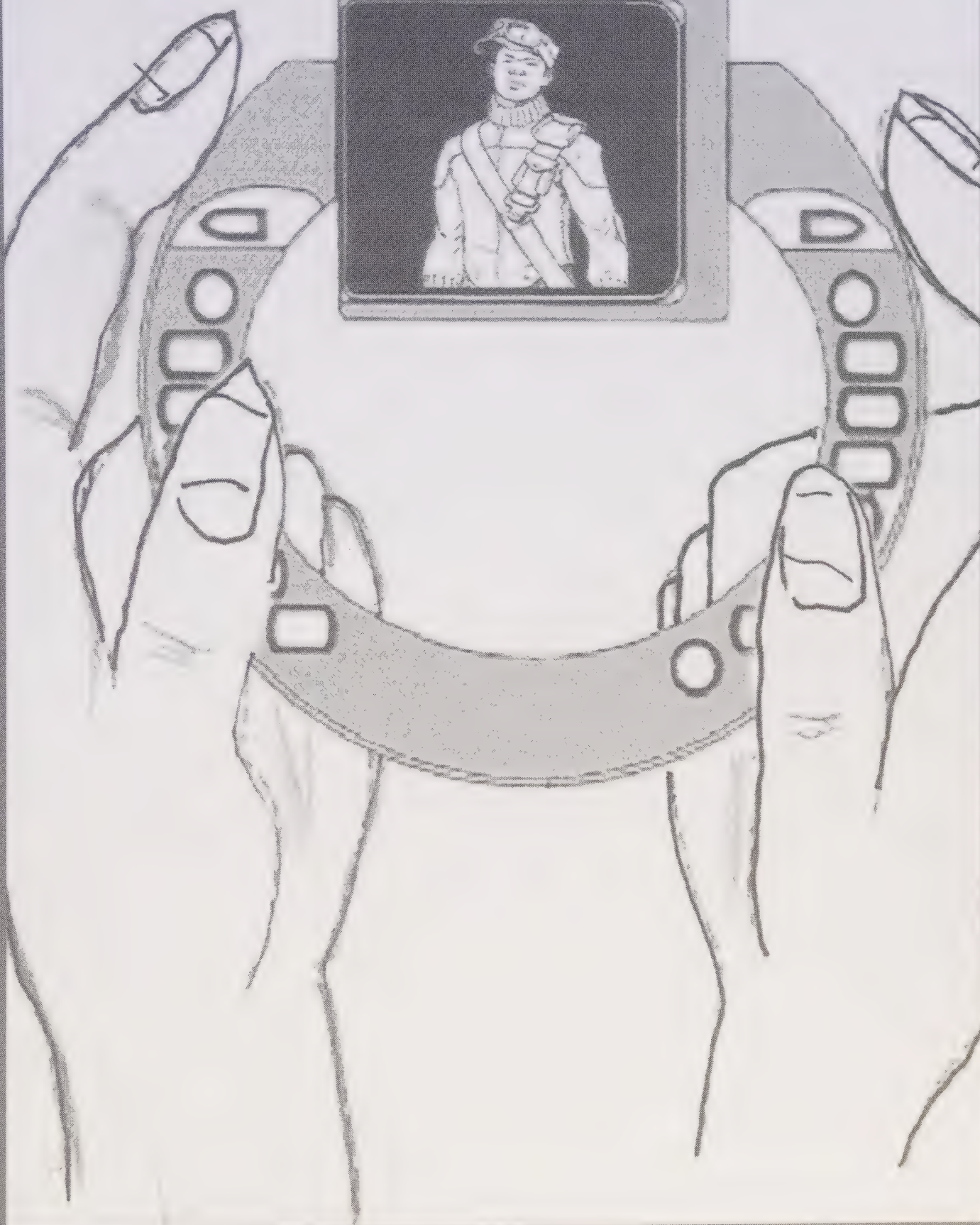
“Solaris?” Jifdar’s face filled the small cab of the vehicle.

“Jifdar?”

“Solaris, can you hear me?”

“Jifdar!”

The hologram vanished. Solaris fiddled with the device, trying to get Jifdar back, but only static returned her efforts. Realizing that the others in the car had gone silent, she put her com unit away.



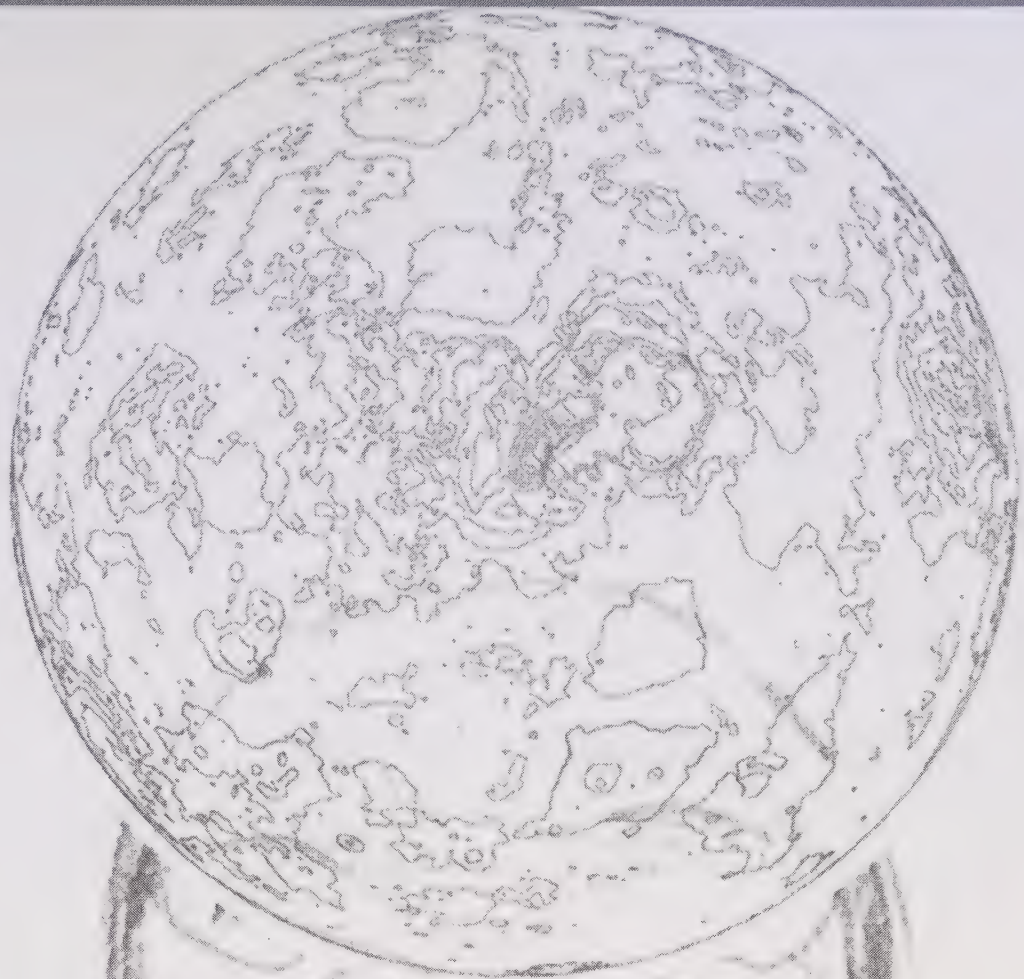
Joe and the others meandered through the overflowing lobby and banquet rooms of the hotel; every inch had been taken over for the science fiction convention. Overwhelmed hotel staff scurried to keep up with the demand for clean rooms, food, well- stocked restrooms, securing amenities for the demanding guests. Every room had been checked out to extra-terrestrials, warring clans, explorers for some mythical organization—which mirrored those seen on popular television shows—and celestial beings, who were just normal people that had painted their bodies in silver glitter.

COMIC-CON IS COMING



“It was far away and the most mysterious. We knew of your planet’s extreme weather conditions. Indeed, we had seen no other planet that housed deserts, frozen wastelands, jungles, great plains, or such vast oceans all in one sphere. One minute it can be pleasantly warm, and the next, bitterly cold. We believed that there could be no life here, but the council wished to be sure, wanting to make peace with all races of intelligence and technological advancement. So, a ship had been chartered to visit the Thirteenth Sector. Being a research scientist, I was asked to go and gladly accepted.

“When we arrived here, at what is now called Earth, we were amazed by what we found. We discovered a very advanced civilization, much like ourselves, except that they had only just begun space flight, centered near the equator in what you now call the Pacific Ocean. Well, I say just begun, but they had managed to reach your red planet. They called themselves Mulyra, which has since been shortened by your historians to Mu, or referred to as Lemuria. They flew on ships that reacted to their thoughts, much like us, and had power technology that did not rely on electricity, but was far more advanced and safer to use, powering their homes and vehicles. But besides their advancements, they were also very spiritual.

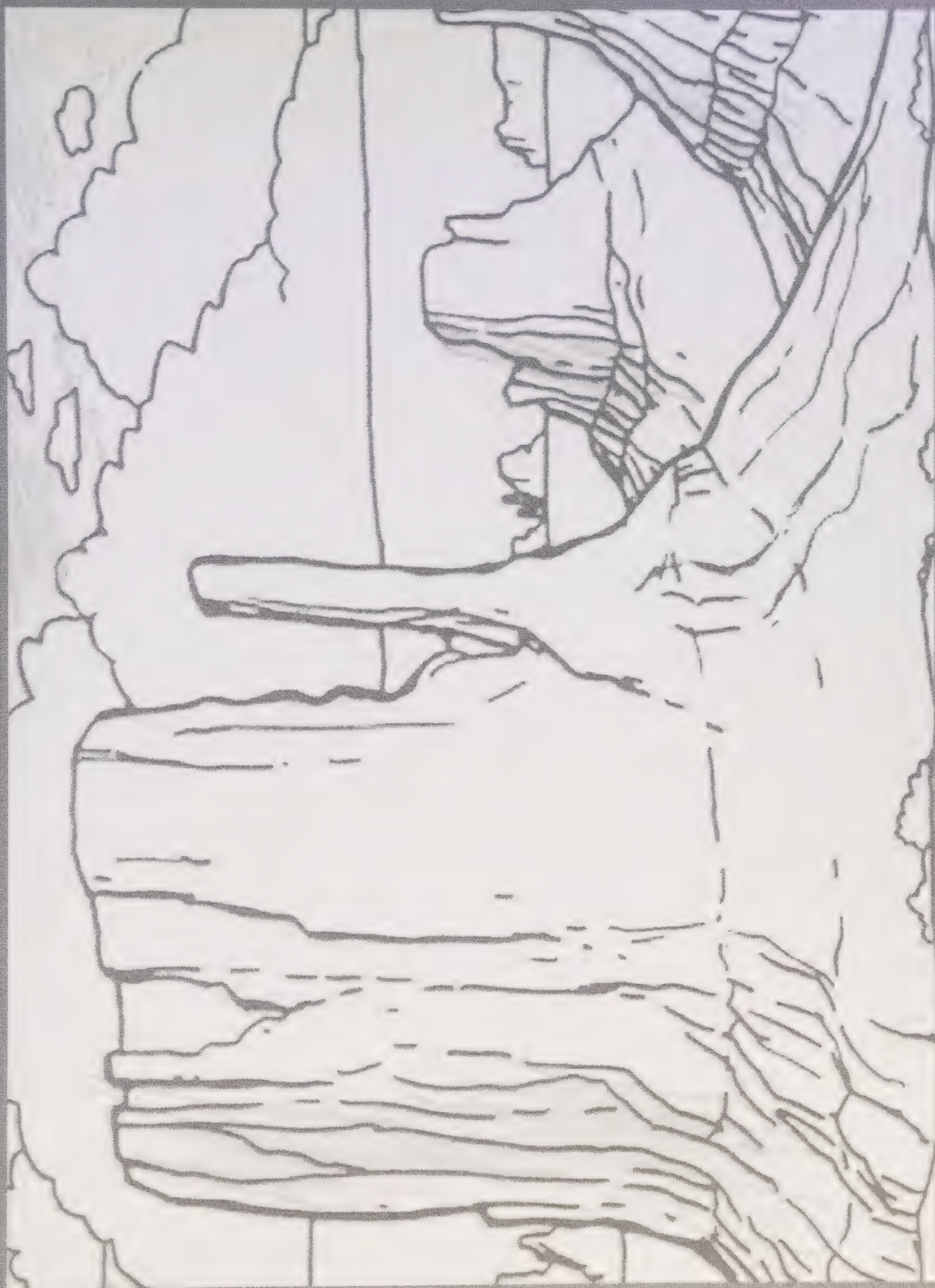


Solaris stepped back from the others; the jewel on her belt buckle had glowed and vibrated, causing her to lose her balance. She yanked the small opaque gem free of its hold and held it up before the others; Achilles' eyes widened as he recognized it and its glow wafted over them.



They all walked down the empty and dusty trail, relishing the warmth of the bright sun. While much of the northern regions of the country experienced cold temperatures, the southwestern region was much milder, allowing them to hike in relative comfort. Each carried a bottle of water, hoping that it would last until they reached their destination. Bumps appeared on their exposed arms as the balmy wind wrapped itself around them; a hint of briskness was mixed in, winter's way of telling them that it intended to battle summer for its hold over the land.

After three hours of hiking over rocks and uneven ground, their sluggish legs yearned for rest and refused to move another step, and poor Fons weaved side to side from exhaustion. Not wanting to stop just yet, Solaris pushed them onward and led them off the path and into the heart of the desert towards one of the monuments that stretched high into the sky.



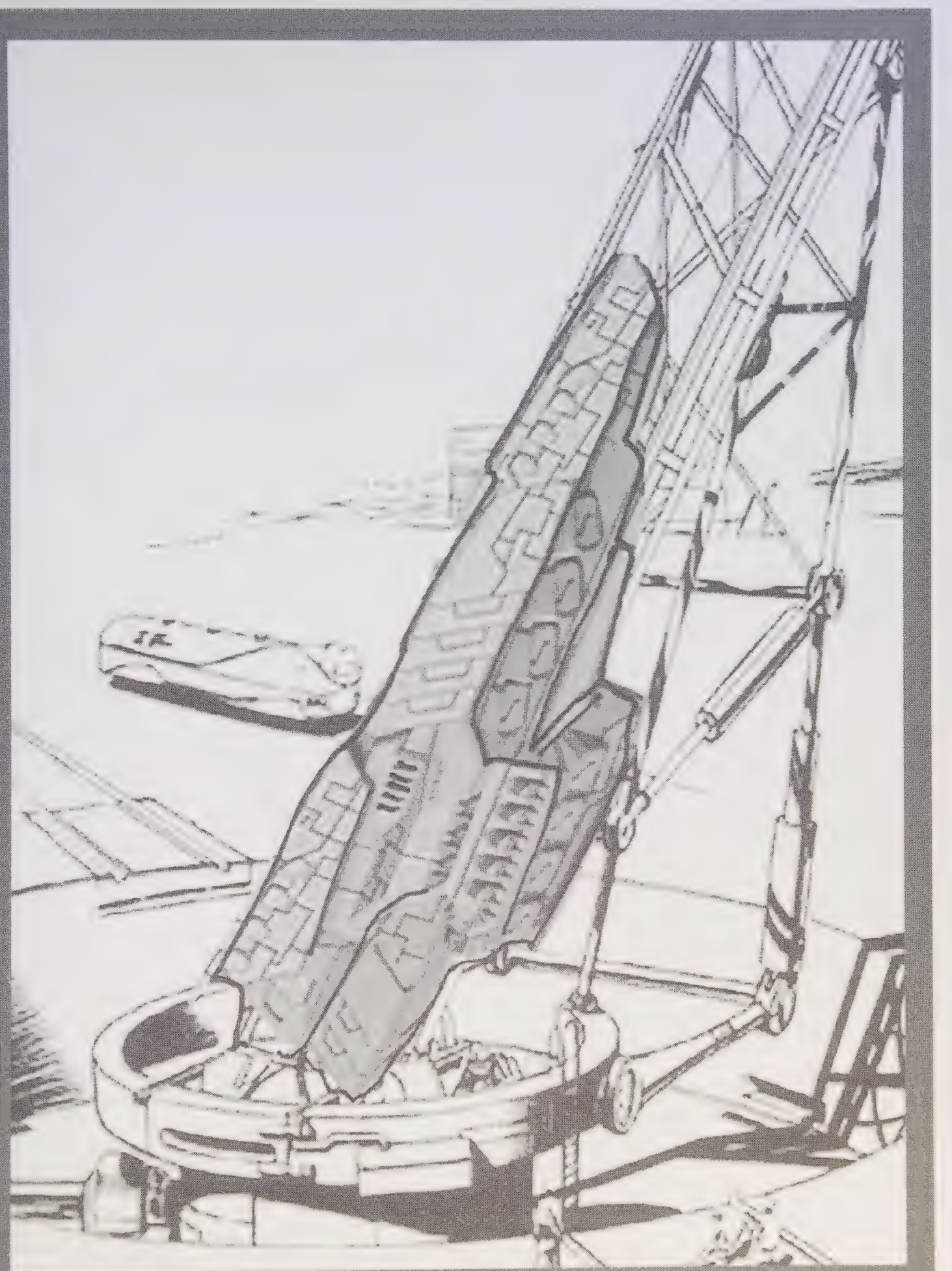
A metal door opened the moment they reached it, closing behind them once they had passed through. More lights turned on. They stood upon a circular pad, 15 paces in diameter, with a matching pad on the ceiling above them; gray circles dotted the strange pad, but that isn't what caught Tom's attention. While the others wandered about the room, and the circular pad covered in more circles, Tom crept over to a metal box with a red button in its center, as though waiting for someone to push it. Most would have left it alone, but Tom allowed his curiosity to rule him, like he did on most occasions, and reached out, forefinger extended, pushing the red button.

ZAP!

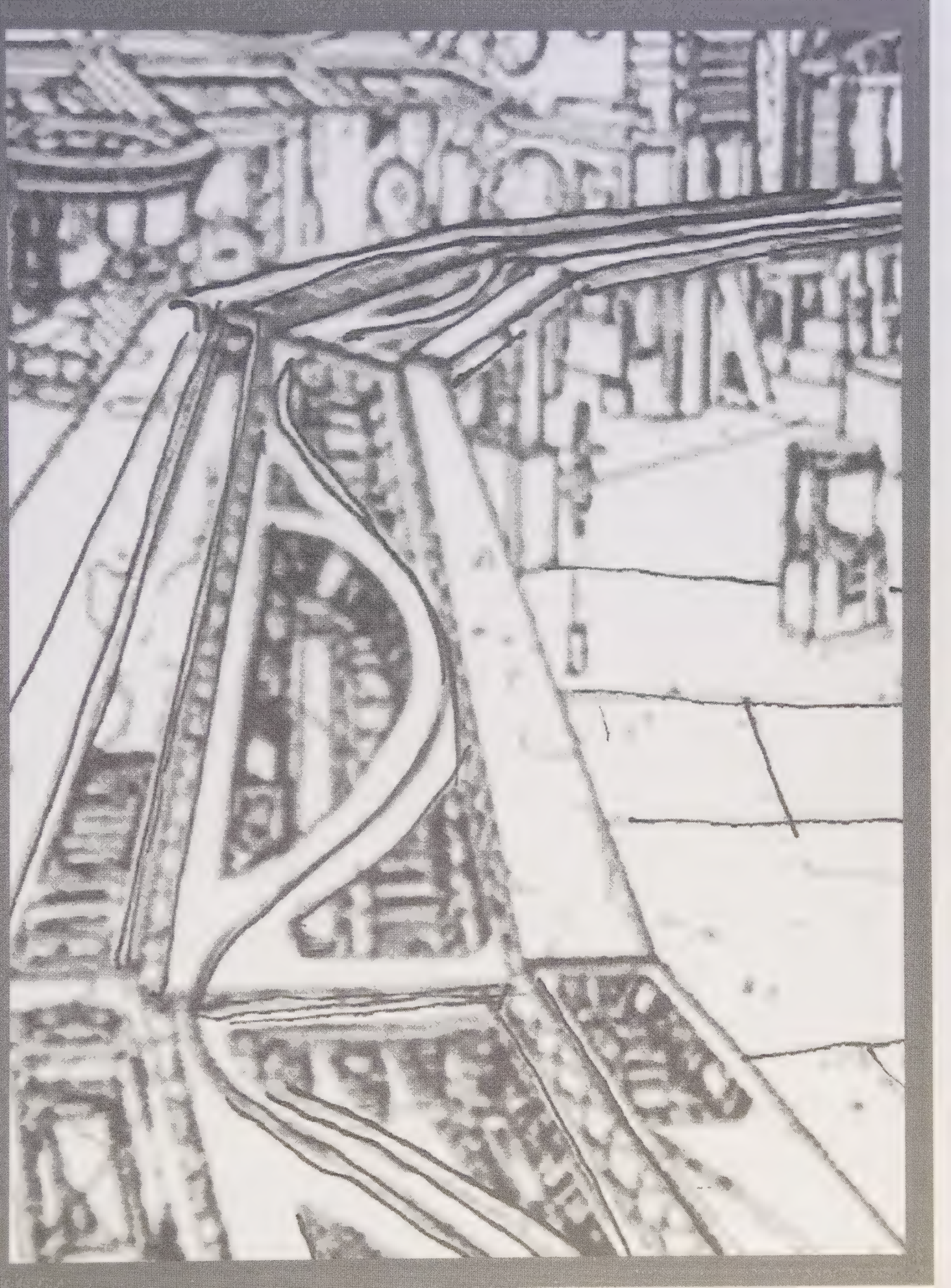
"What was that?" demanded Obiah, spiraling on his feet. As he and those with him glanced around, he noticed that their number had decreased—Tom, Brie, Solon, Alfric, and Rynah had disappeared.



Stepping through, their eyes widened as a single ship—sleek in design with nobs for wings—waited for its owner to return; its coal-colored hull blended in with the shadows and rocky backdrop. Rays of yellow sunlight dropped down from above as a hangar door opened and a launch ramp appeared, lifting the ship up at a 45-degree angle.

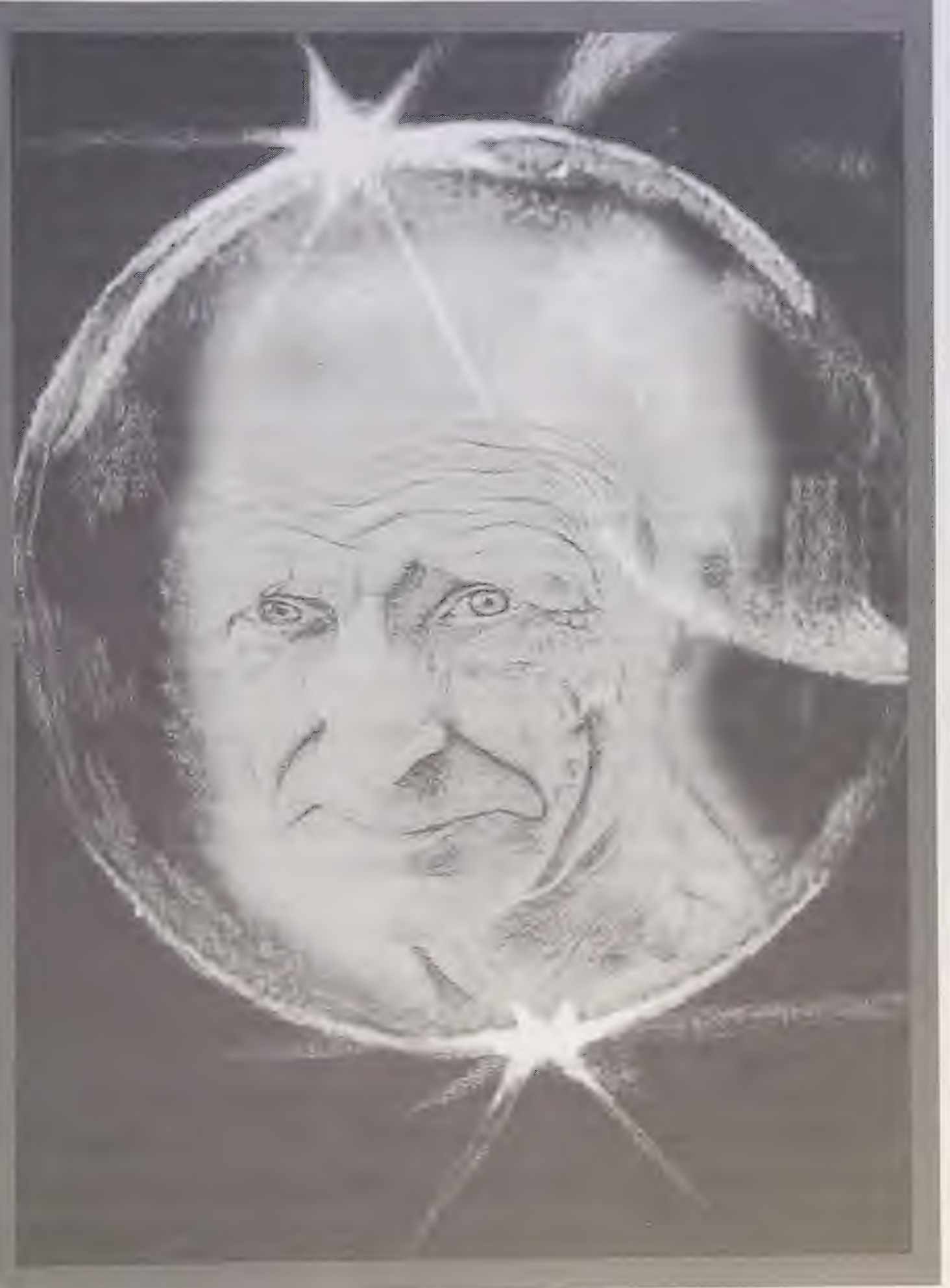


They trekked down the hill and passed through an archway made of amber; each looked all around, necks craned upward, as they strolled through the black streets and under elevated rails. Lights flared up, activated by their movements, bringing signs and holographic displays to life, each advertising a product or service.



The others gathered around him. Solon took a thin, penny-sized disk and placed it in the playback device, something he had learned to do from watching Tom and Brie do the same on numerous occasions. A holographic image of Herclai fizzled to life, zapping and sizzling before solidifying.

Achilles watched the Herclai hologram, his eyes wide as a longing expression covered his face; his mind remembered the echoes of the past. Memories flooded his mind as he recalled the day Mulyra sunk beneath the sea in a crust of lava and steam, buried for eternity.

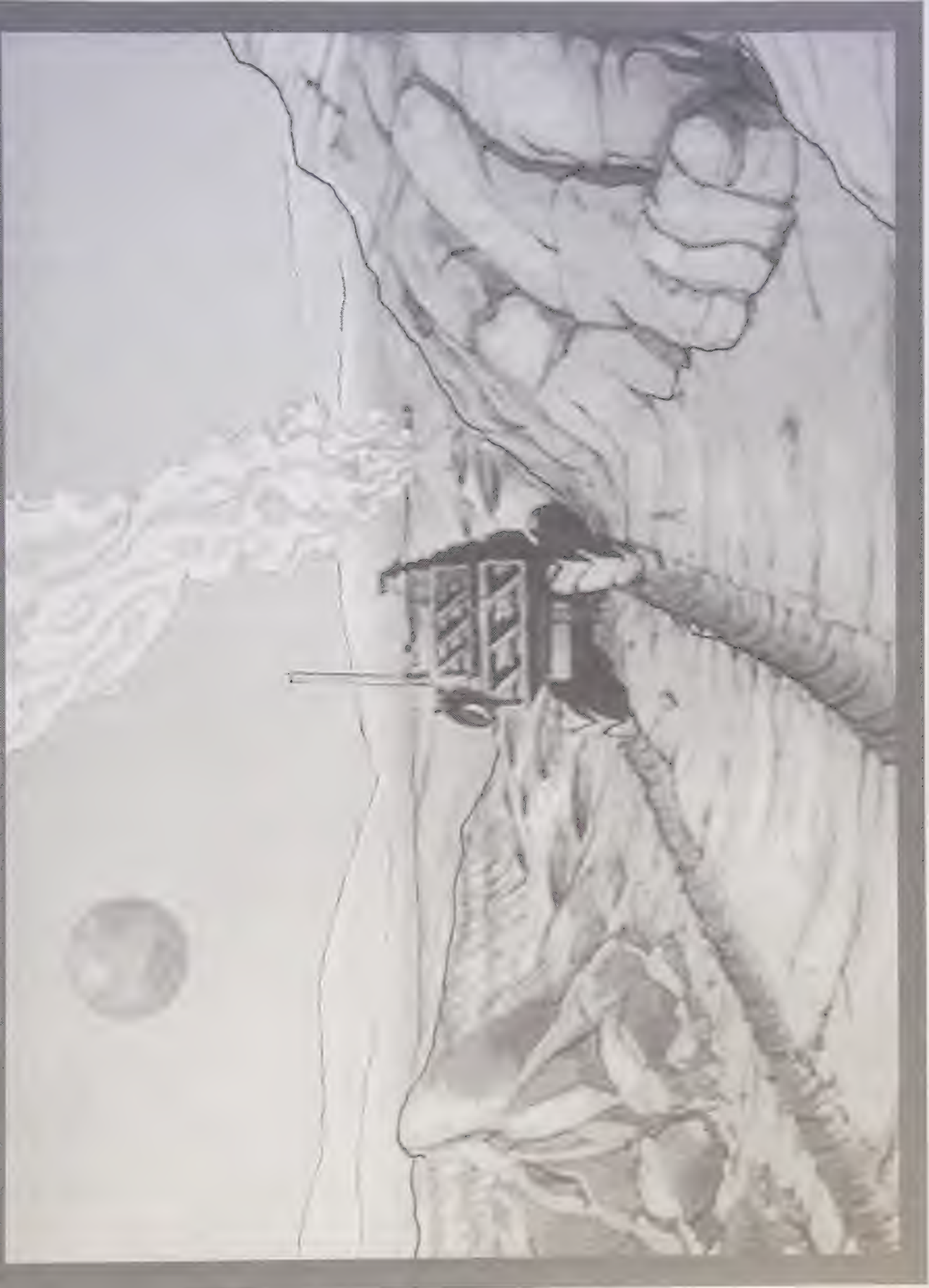


The whine of a ship filled his ears as he neared the hangar bay, pausing before the sealed doors and waiting for the red light to flash green. It changed. Stentorian clangs echoed around him as the locks released, allowing him entrance. Jifdar squeezed through the doors, his coat catching on a protruding scrap of steel and putting another tear in it, as he forced his way into the room.

Controlling his heavy breathing from the exertion of rushing down to the hangar bay, Jifdar stood, hands clasped behind his back, as he took on a stoic pose, not wanting to give these newcomers anything to use against him. The ship—its sleek design and luminescent hull enthralled Jifdar as his pirate mind calculated the total sum he'd receive for the parts—lowered its ramp, revealing three figures. He watched as they stepped down, two in regal stances, while the third tripped over his own feet, fell, and rolled the rest of the way down the ramp. Jifdar maintained the thin line he had forced his lips into.



With slow and steady steps, they hiked across the base of the crater, the soft dust transforming into ragged rocks that scraped against the bottom of their boots as the crater's shadow stretched over them. Both Jifdar and Klanor took the lead; Klanor because he had an idea of where to go, but Jifdar did not want him getting too far ahead. Onward they went, four blue-suited beings walking in a line across the moon, leaving unsteady footprints that would never fade. Its serenity gave the impression of tranquility, but all knew—even Alfric, despite his unfamiliarity with space walking—how deceiving such appearances could be.



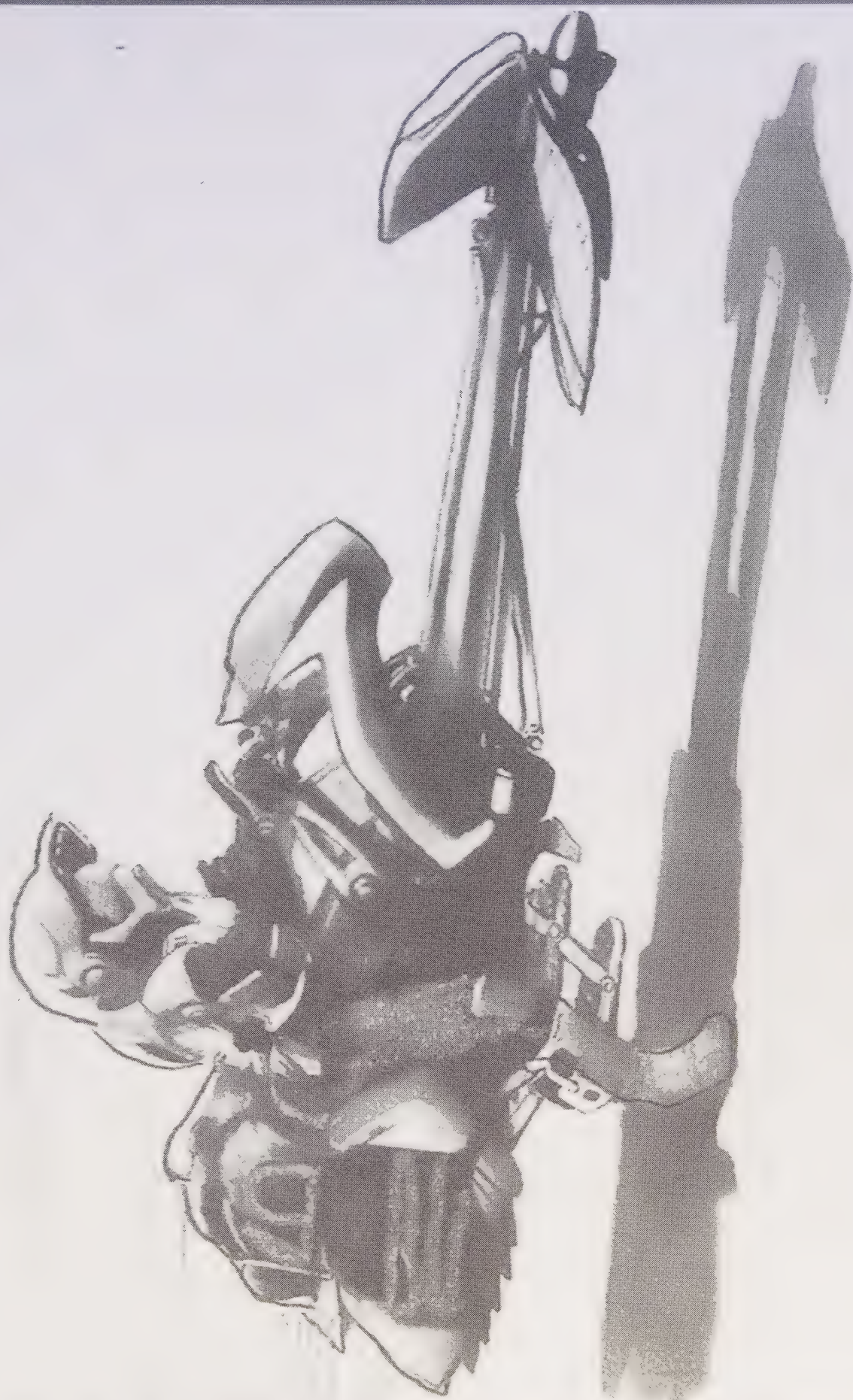
Tom glanced at Joe staring out the window, marveling at the stars around them and the looming red planet that most only saw from Earth's surface. He remembered when he had first been brought to outer space and how he examined everything. A fleeting thought about the professors at the academy, and what they would think of him now if they knew he had waged space battles in a distant solar system, flew through his mind, and a satisfied smile crept across his lips. Tom pushed it aside.



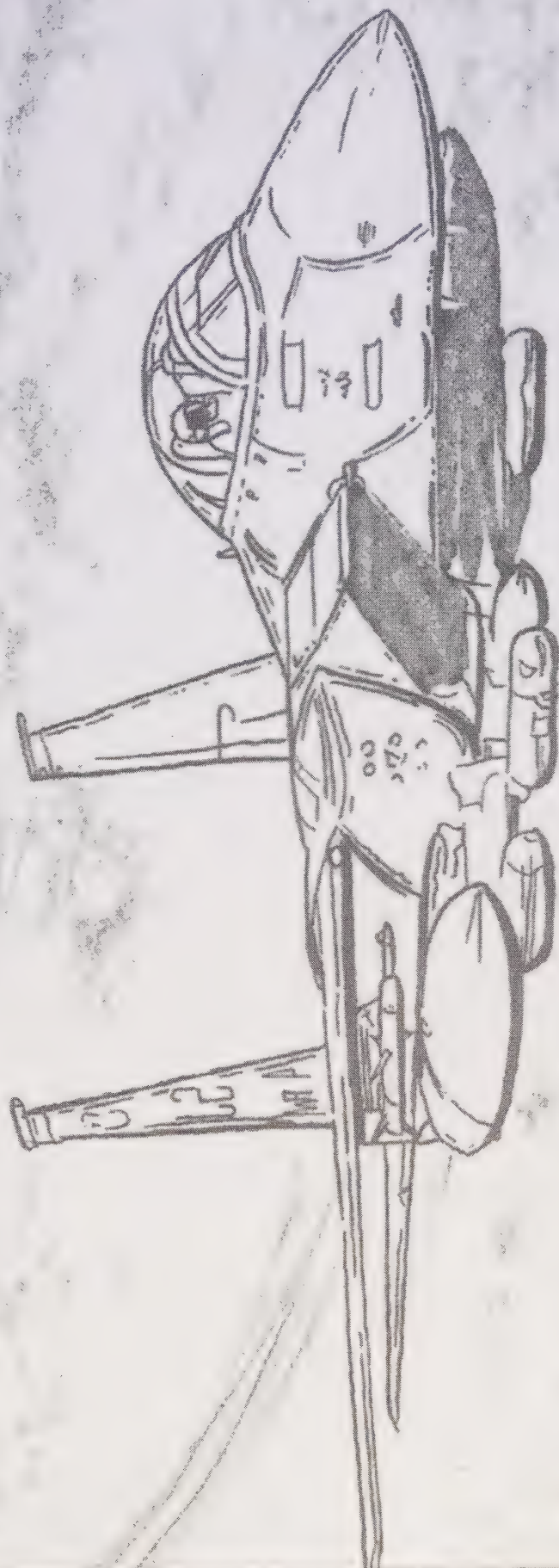
A speck of light caught her attention. Brie paused, floating in the water while Solaris and Rynah swam onward. Only darkness greeted her. Confused, Brie kicked her feet, stopping when the faint light blinked again. Peering into the dark waters, Brie watched as the flashing light appeared to be far away, yet close by at the same time.



Another hoverbike headed straight for her. Brie leapt to her feet and ran for the fire exit at the other end of the roof as laser fire pelted the surface around her. Bits of chipped concrete tore through her jeans and pricked the skin around her legs. She reached the fire escape just as the hoverbike almost plowed into her, forcing her to stumble and sending her tumbling down five steps before she caught herself.



More fighter jets roared as they passed above her, but something else caught her attention, the ominous growl of a lion who viewed her as an invader in his territory. Rynah and the lion locked eyes for a moment. Though she had never seen such an animal before, its behavior told her she need to get away from it. It lunged. Rynah bolted, half running, half stumbling, as she ran for the door that allowed zoo personnel into the pen. Locked. The lion approached. Rynah checked for her laser pistol, but found nothing, remembering that Solaris had it when they were separated. She jumped out of the way just as the lion reached her. It lowered to the ground and glared at her; its venomous growling filled her with fear.

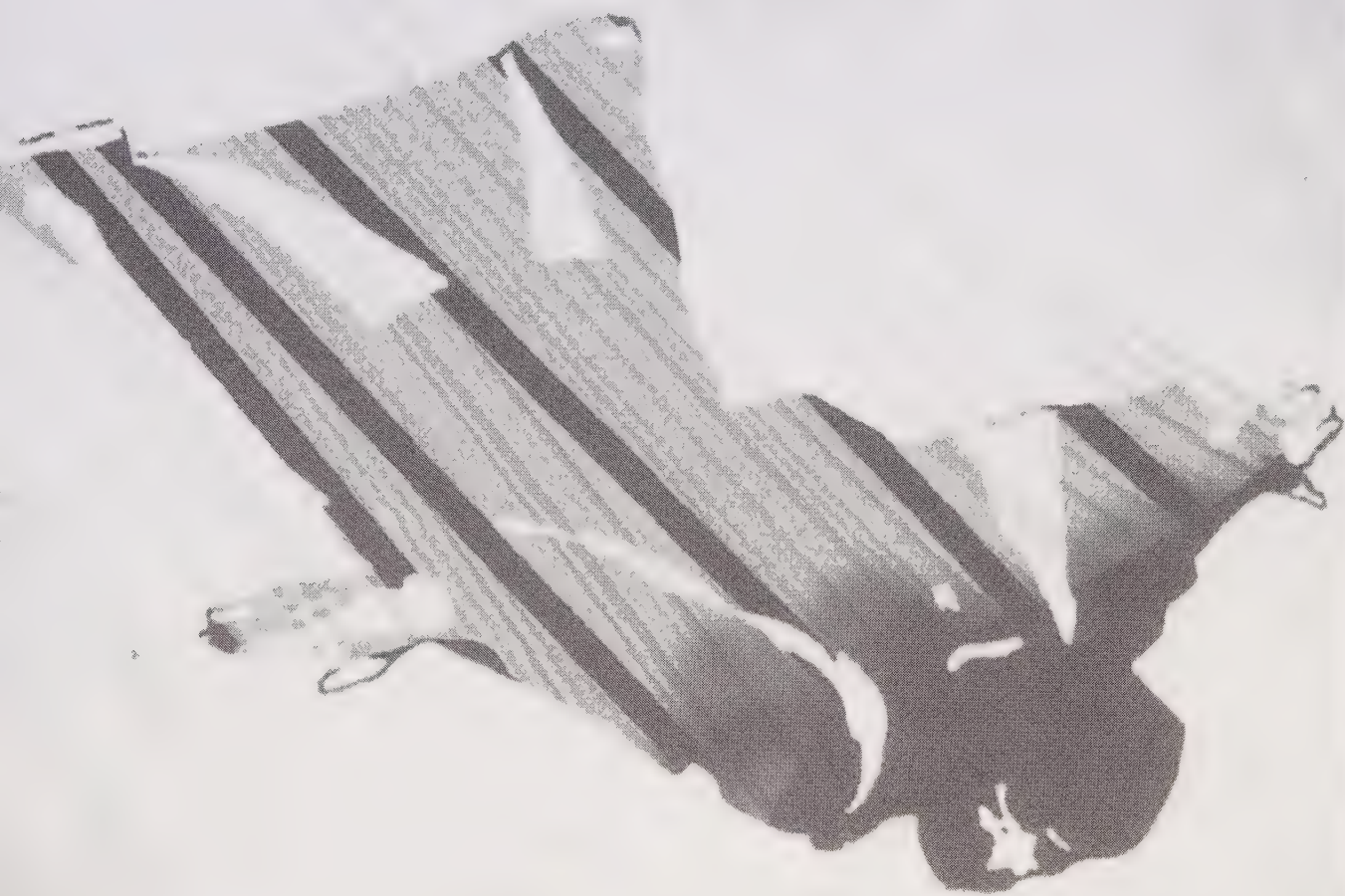


The pole lurched. Looking up, Solaris noticed that the metal had been weakened over time from being exposed to the elements; it would not support her weight for much longer. It dipped again, bending downward, while she still hung onto it. Three hoverbikes noticed her plight. They left their pursuit of the innocent people below, who ran in their desperate attempts to escape the onslaught, and veered towards her. The pole dropped again. Unwilling to give up, Solaris raised Rynah's laser pistol, which she still had with her, and fired. Her first two shots missed, but the third struck one of the hoverbikes, forcing it to crash into the side of the building and send a plume of smoke in her direction.

The two other bikes fired at her, striking the windows just above her head and sending shards of glass down upon her. Her nano skin rippled as it absorbed the impact and healed itself. Solaris fired again, but the pilots had expected it and dodged her feeble attacks. Again, the pole lurched, and Solaris knew that it would not hold for much longer. She watched, helpless, as the two remaining hoverbikes closed in for the kill. Remembering one of Marlow's last messages to her (*You cannot give up. You must not give up.*), Solaris aimed the laser pistol at one of the pilot's heads, but before she could fire, a green sphere fell from the sky, landing on one of the bikes before reducing it to a pile of ash.



Joe put on the wingsuit he had brought with him, teetered on the edge of the roof, taking one last glance at Brie, and jumped. The wind rushed his face and jolted his body as it caught the flaps of the suit, allowing him to soar.



The shadowy wall lit up as symbols, connected by multicolored lines, burst to life, springing from where the robotic firefly had landed. The ancient writing stretched up in a mishmash pattern, spreading to another connecting structure. Fons and Tre stepped back, enthralled by the illuminating sight before them, realizing the connecting walls formed a pyramid buried deep beneath the ground, and what was referred to as Shiprock was its crown. Once the light stretched to the top, streaks of blue with gold mixed in burst from the pyramid, scattering as it stretched across the ground and beneath their meandering feet. A loud clunking noise filled their ears, and they watched as massive, triangular doors opened, releasing a tiered set of ivory steps for them to climb.

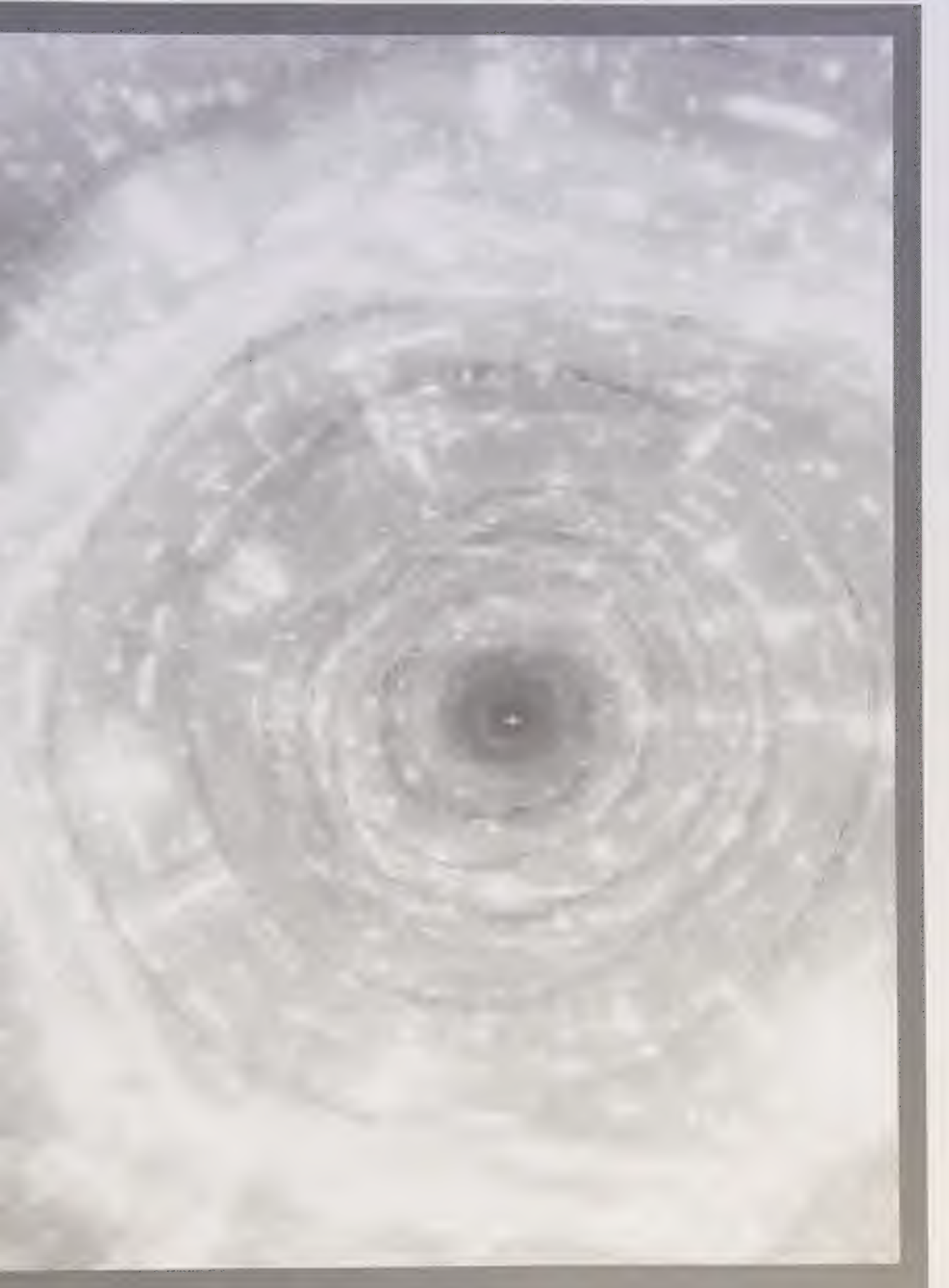
Jaws dropping, the two men stumbled over to the steps and climbed up them, turning in circles as they went and absorbing every detail of the ancient structure. Trembling, Tre and Fons passed through the doors and into the center of the pyramid, while oblong-shaped lamps sprang to life, casting their marigold-colored light upon them. Their feet carried them to the center of the chamber until they stopped. The floor opened and computer consoles sprang from it, rising until they were waist high, followed by holomonitors that enveloped them in a cocoon of pale green light with images of other ancient temples and pyramids staring back at them.



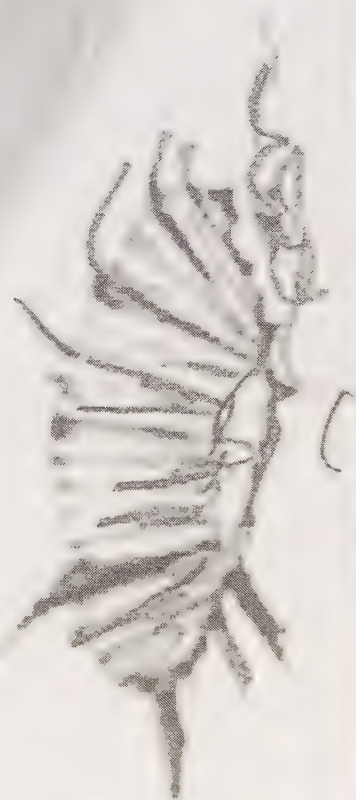
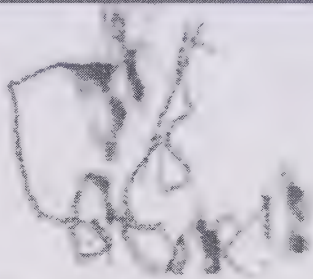
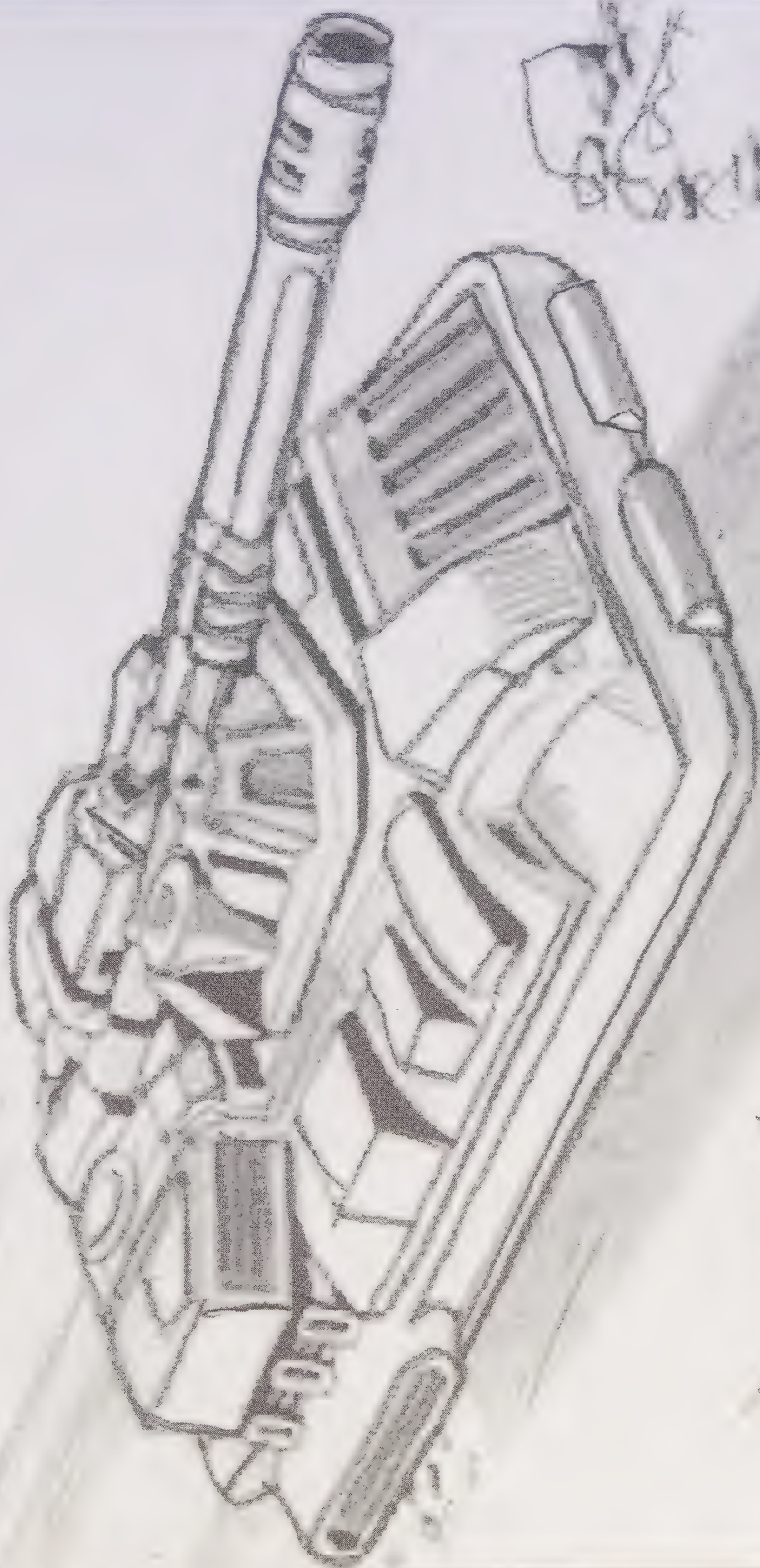
General Delmar raced past the massive ships (the size of apartment complexes), dodging their laser canons, unfazed by their blasts that ricocheted off the hull of his single-pilot fighter craft. Laser fire whizzed past him. He banked and swerved as he dodged it. Enemy ships appeared ahead of him. General Delmar accelerated, heading straight for the ships in front of him, while blocking their view from the one that chased him. Just before he reached the two vessel before him, he dove downward and the one that chased him plowed into the other two ships, disappearing in flames.



Infuriated, Fredyr tackled the Viking, flinging him onto his back. Before Alfric could jump up, the ship tilted to the side, causing him to roll to the left until he crashed into the railing; his sword fell from his grasp, clattering several feet away. Leering over him, Fredyr grinned in triumph, assured that he had won, and tightened his grip on the hilt of his blade as he prepared for his final strike. Alfric spotted a fallen pipe nearby; its end had been sheared into a sharp point. Before Fredyr could finish him, a cannon blast detonated near the dome, flinging shrapnel in every direction. Alfric seized the pipe, releasing a terrifying battle cry, and stabbed Fredyr in the stomach with it, picking him up and hoisting him over his shoulders before throwing him over the railing. He watched, maintaining his stolid demeanor, as Fredyr, clutching his bleeding wound, fell into a swirling mass, where a portal through time and space had opened, swallowing him.



The ground shook, rattling their jaws. Another trembling thump echoed around them. Turning around, their hearts sank as they found one of the newly formed tanks behind them, its laser cannon aimed right for them. Just then, the sonic boom of two Air Force fighter jets deafened them as they dove for an attack, but the tank fired its laser cannon at them, vaporizing both planes; the falling embers being all that remained of them.



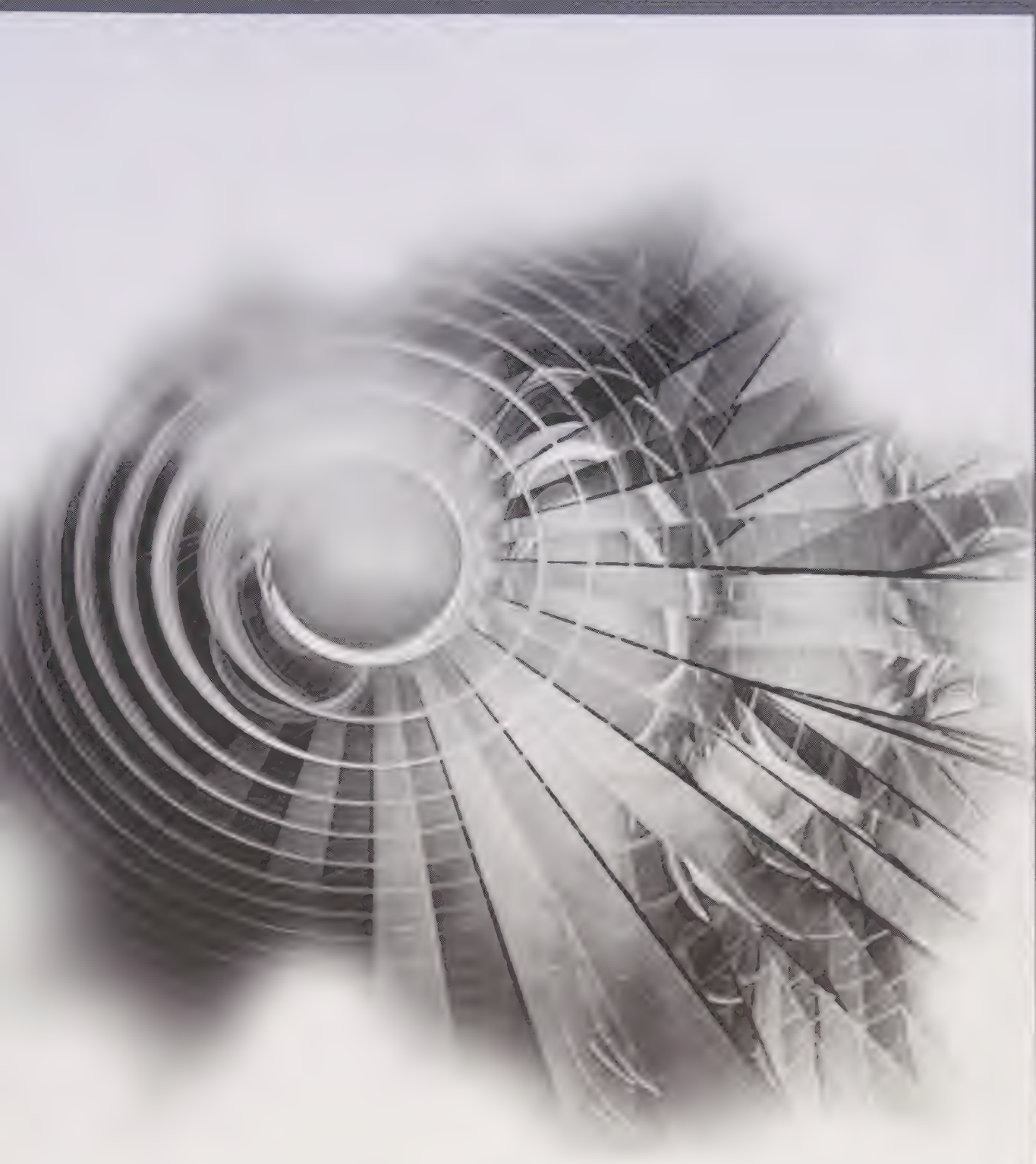
The hanger doors, which had been disguised as the lakebed, completed with underwater plants and pebbled sand, opened, allowing the water to rush inside and consuming what had once been protected. The ship rose through the dark waters of Lake Tahoe; white crests peaked and foamed on the surface, forming fluidic towers that crashed into the glassy surface of the crystal blue water as it ascended, slowly poking through—drops of white liquid sprayed any in its path—until it had cleared the lake. Upward, the massive vessel went—those strolling on the beach watched in awe when the ship blocked the sun—as water poured from it, draining from every crevice where it had collected. Gold spires cast long shadows across the roving waves, stretching up the white sand and overwhelming the vendors that had set up shop, which lay abandoned as their owners joined the gathering crowd that gaped at the spectacle.



One by one, they each thought of the three parts being a single ship and the vessels they were on, as though knowing what to do, lined up, extending docking arms that connected to one another and retracted until what had been three distinct ships, morphed into one massive vessel with seamless lines. Metal flaps popped up, clinging to one another with a magnetic seal and forming what looked like spikes stretching down the center of the vessel from end to end. Ridges lined the bow of the ship, curving and twisting in such a way that it gave it the appearance of a head with fanged teeth and a stubby snout with whiskers and honey-colored eyes that burned red as it crept into the sun's light, watching all that moved before them. More ridges curled around the base of the ship, giving it the appearance of folded wings with rainbows that burst from its edges. To anyone with an ounce of an imagination, the massive vessel looked like a dragon.



Rynah took the bracelet her grandfather had given her and placed it in the empty space of the crystals' base. The wind stopped, but before either of them had a chance to breathe, the newly formed crystal turned white, sending a force that knocked each of them backward. The winds started up again, tearing into them and forcing them to remain on their knees.



Brie's breaths fogged the window she stared out of as she watched, helpless, while the solar flare headed straight for her and the ships that flew around her, each locked in their own battle. Her tiny pod slipped past them, unnoticed. A zigzagging pattern of light caught her attention. She looked at it, unsure of what it was, but knew it meant disaster if her escape pod struck it.

"Can't you go any faster?" she screamed at the computer when the Earth grabbed her in its gravitational pull.

No answer.

Fire spread across the pod's exterior, turning the inside into a sweltering oven that burned her skin. Gripping her seat so tight that her knuckles turned white, Brie watched through the small portal, holding her breath, as her tiny pod, along with a few pirate ships, slipped past the planetary shield that had encompassed the Earth before it sealed. At that moment, the solar flare reached them. It swarmed over the shield, turning the sky a burnt orange and red for several minutes before dissipating.



On the raspberry-colored, sloping hills of the Ancient Lanyran countryside—with clusters of violet zinnias and magnolias dotting it—an opaque, swirling mass formed, small at first, before growing to the size of a horse. With a—Pop!—Rynah shot of out the mesmerizing fog, landing hard on the dusty ground and rolling a few yards down the hill until she slowed to a stop. Dizzy, she lifted her head and saw the swirling fog. Not wanting to be stuck in this strange place, and concerned about Solaris and the others, Rynah jumped to her unsteady feet and ran to the vortex, but it disappeared before she reached it. She shoved her hand into her pocket, pulling out only lint as the replica of a crystal she had made while on the dragon ship had fallen out. Dismayed, she stared at the empty space where it had once been, in the faint, purple glow of the sun, unsure of what to do.

“May I help you?”

Rynah spun around, having never heard the soft steps of the man that had approached her from behind; he had been out for his evening stroll and noticed the strange vortex and her and had decided to investigate. Rynah gave him a quizzical look, recognizing the ancient Lanyran language that he spoke, glad that she had taken the time to learn it. Glancing around, she turned in circles, looking at the lavender-colored leaves of the trees and the waist high grass, with its purple tint that waved in the soft, warm breeze that she had loved since she was a child.

“Where am I?” Rynah asked.

“Desmyr,” said the man, as though she should have known.

Rynah gasped. She remembered Marlow talking about how Desmyr was one of the oldest cities of Lanyr and realized that she was home, not the Lanyr she knew, but a more mysterious one.

“Where are you from?” asked the man, unconcerned about her security uniform, and how it differed from the elegant robes that those in ancient Lanyran society wore.

Rynah glanced back at where the swirling mass had once been and reached up to twirl her grandfather’s ring, having forgotten that it was no longer around her neck, and wished that she could have had the chance to say good-bye to Brie, Tom, Alfric, Solon, and Solaris. Though saddened that she would never see them again, Rynah turned toward that man who stared at her with his keen eyes, remembering something Marlow had once told her.

“All things come to an end,” he had said, “but sometimes, from that end comes a new beginning.”

“From far away,” Rynah said, in answer to the man’s question. “What is your name?”

The man shook his hands, appalled at his own lack of manners, saying, “Arnor. And yours?”

“Rynah.”

“Come,” said Arnor, leading Rynah away, wanting to know more about this strange woman who appeared from nowhere “you must be famished and my sister makes the best onion stew.”



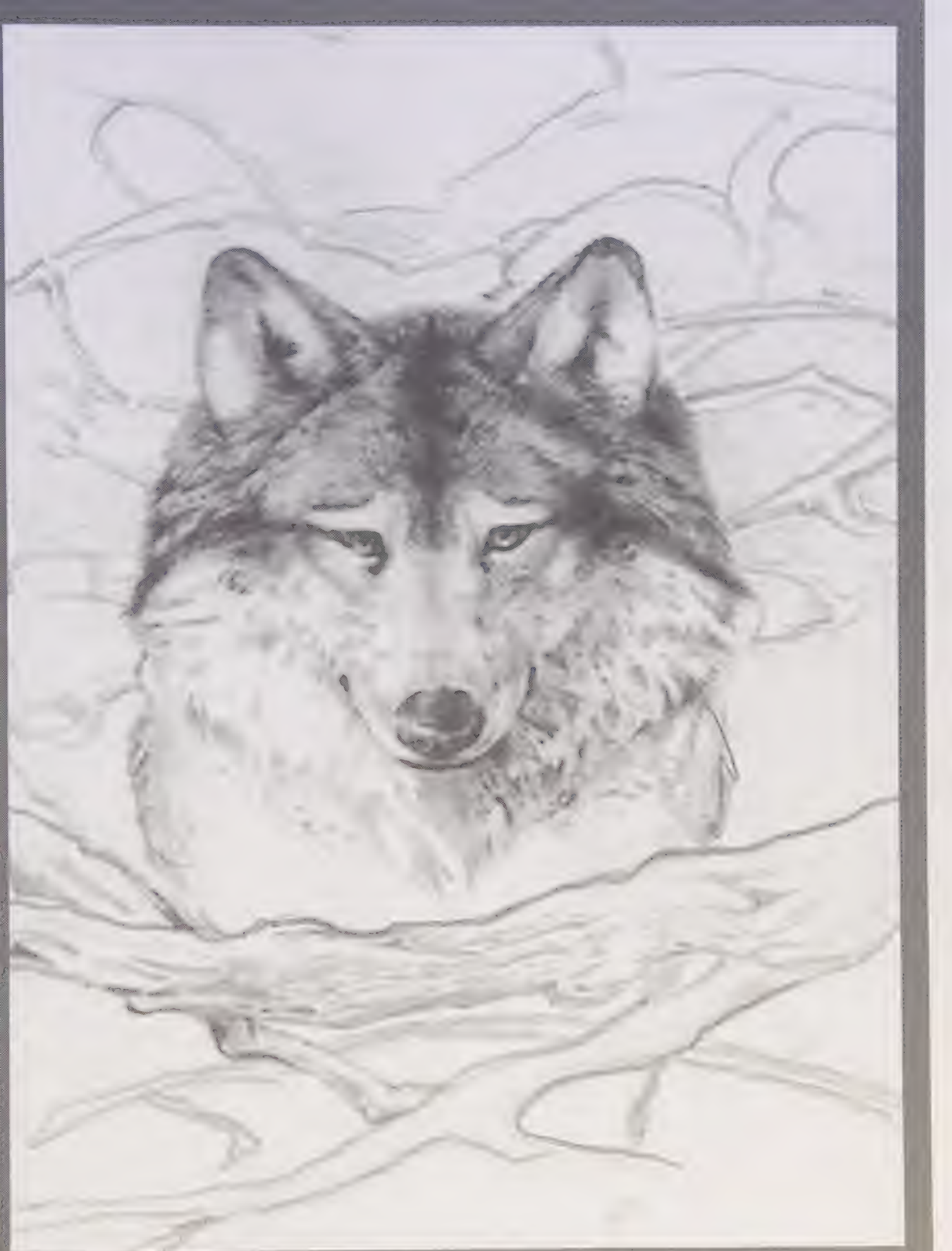
Marlow warned this day would come: the day when Lanyr, my home, was destroyed. But he never mentioned the people whom I would call friends, nor the bond that we would form.

And in case you are wondering what happened to Rynah the day she repaid her debt to Brie, I can tell you that she did not perish when she fell through the wormhole—she went home, back to Lanyr, or what we called Ancient Lanyr. The wormhole released her near a small village, where she met a man and found the joy and love that so many seek, and that she desperately wanted. As her life neared its end, she wrote, in poetic verse, about her time on a ship and the adventure she shared with four of the most unlikely heroes from a planet she had once thought was a myth, leaving them a guide.

And as for the replica of a crystal that she had with her at the time, it had fallen from her pocket and turned up in a cave on a planet of desert sand where it was discovered by the most unlikely of heroes, all of whom came from different worlds and bore exile's blood.

And so the story of Rynah, of the crystals, comes to a close. Just as every myth has a beginning; every legend has an end.

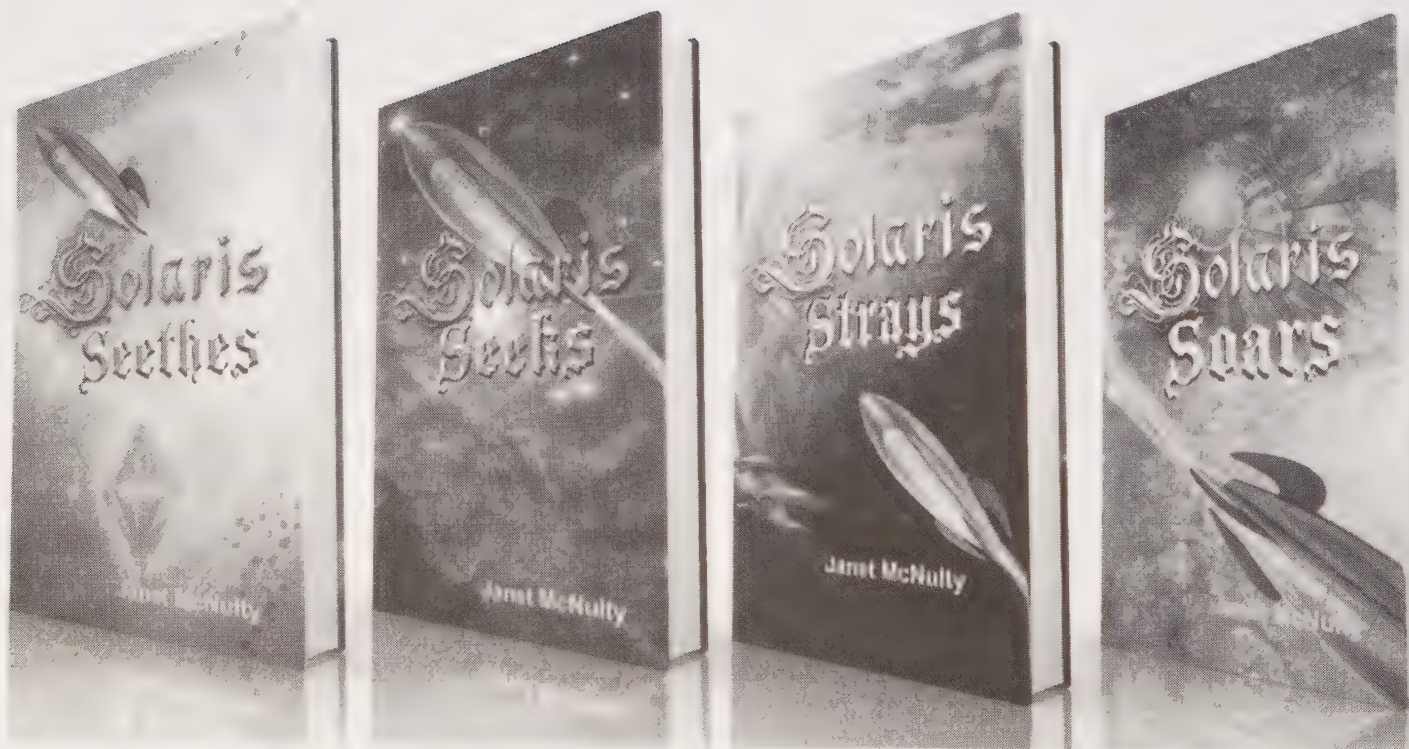
And if you hear stories about a woman with skin that matches the sunset sky, do not dismiss them. For every legend has some truth to it as Rynah once learned. Perhaps one day, you will find yourself about to fall off a precipice and a hand reaches out for you. Reach for that hand. It is mine, fulfilling a promise.



Solaris

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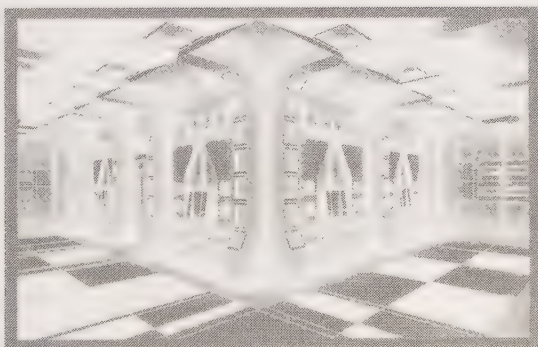
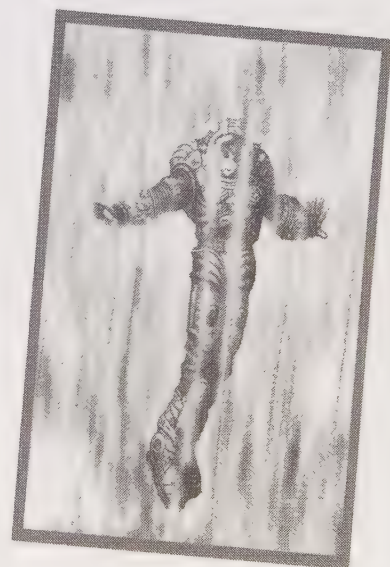
Solaris



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Don't forget to read the book as the adventure is just beginning.

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the

AUTHOR

Ms. McNulty began writing short stories at an early age. That passion continued through college until she published her first book: *Legends Lost: Amborese* under the pen name of Nova Rose. Since then, she has gone on to publish a mystery series, children's books, and even a dystopian series.

Ms. McNulty currently lives in West Virginia, where she enjoys hiking, being outside, crocheting, or simply sitting around and doing nothing. She continues writing and is busy working on her new series.



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